

Among the Luo a man is excluded from marrying into clans as distant as that of his maternal grandmother or into the maximal lineage of his maternal great-grandmother. Thus a Luo man may not marry his kin, but only wasigu (enemies) with whom no kinship is recognised. It is, therefore, difficult for a man to marry into a clan or lineage within his own tribe. The system of exogamy assists in the structural differentiation of a tribe but also it creates relations of a personal and kinship nature between individuals of two different tribes. 582

The relationship between kinship and territorial units seems to follow closely the pattern found in other Nilotic tribal groups. In the Alego tribe, for example, we are told that there is a dominant clan, the Jo Alego, and its maximal lineages, the Jo Sege and the Ka Denge. There are a number of other clans and large lineages living in the tribal territory as well as small stranger groups and individuals. The presence of these clans and lineages in Alego, and their relations with the Jo Alego, are accounted for by traditions or myths in which stranger lineages and the lineages in possession (which are personified) intermarry, and the stranger lineages assume the position of in-laws. Other tribal areas have a similar structure. Evans-Pritchard states that the relative values of lineages are the same as with the Nuer. In opposition to other maximal lineages a man will give the name of his own maximal lineage but when speaking of an opposed smaller lineage he will give his own immediate lineage, the particular branch of the maximal lineage to which it belongs. (1) 613 614

The Dominant Clan

The dominant clan is usually identified linguistically with the tribe. Thus, Alego means both the tribesmen of Alego tribal territory and the patrilineal descendants of Alego. Members of the dominant clan alone are *jopiny* or *jogweng* - the people of the land and the owners of it. The rest are *jodak* - the separated people, the strangers. Stranger lineages are grafted into the lineage structure of the dominant clan so that, through recognition of female links, the whole tribe may be regarded as a system of cognatic lineages. The Luo refer to the affiliated stranger lineages as *kaurce* - lineages of in-laws, or *kaner* - lineages of maternal uncles, since it is from them that they take their wives and the mothers of their children. (2) 619 614 613

For general purposes the *jopiny* and *jodak* are on equal terms and co-operate in matters of common interest. The differentiation only appears in matters of ritual, in marriage regulations and when homicide occurs. In recent times the differentiation has become plainer through land disputes. Formerly there was enough land for everyone and more could be obtained by war and migration. Now, there is considerable inter-lineage enmity about land. The *jopiny* claim the land in virtue of their ownership of the tribal territory and as proof of this they point to the ancestral graves. Stranger lineages which are numerous and powerful may also claim to be *jopiny* in the same area and, having dwelt there for some generations, can also point to their ancestral graves. It is the general rule that a lineage has the right to cultivate land where its forebears have lived for several genera- 614 613 598

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 1949, No. VII, pp. 10-11.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 14.

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tions. Sometimes several lineages can claim this right, and the structural differentiation and the type of connecting link between them is revealed in the resulting disputes.

IMPORTANT MEN AMONG THE LUO

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There is no real political office in the Luo tribes, but there are a number of people who are of notable status.

The Ruoth

The *ruoth* is simply an influential man. He is richer in wives and cattle than most people, and he may help a poor man to marry by giving him a cow. Any man may become a *ruoth*, although he is usually a member of the dominant clan of the tribe. No such political or ritual significance are attached to the Luo *ruoth* as are associated with the Lango and Acholi *ruodi*.⁽¹⁾

Thuondi

The *thuondi* are warriors of reputation. They lead all the raids against the tribal enemies. Their position depends entirely on individual ability in war, and therefore they are not necessarily succeeded by their sons.

The Won Gweng

The *won gweng* is the father of the land and a man of influence in every district. He is a senior member of a lineage of the dominant clan of the tribe, and settles land disputes within the tribe. He also sacrifices to the sacred spear of the clan, and points it towards the enemy before a tribal war begins.⁽²⁾

RITUAL EXPERTS

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The *jabilo* is the most important of the ritual experts and the chief tribal figure. There may be more than one *jabilo* in each tribal segment, but usually one is more influential than the rest. The *jabilo* inherits his position from his father. His functions include divination of the fortunes of war, cursing the enemy and making magic to secure victory. Although he does not accompany the warriors, the *jabilo* receives part of the spoil in return for his services and is, therefore, usually a *ruoth* - a rich man. A further investigation of the *jabilo*'s place in society would be particularly interesting. It is said that he was also a peace-maker and could intervene in a fight by dragging his leopard-skin along the ground between the two opposing sides.⁽³⁾ The *jabilo* sometimes exercises the functions of rain-maker (*jakothe* or *won koth*).

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Luo tribal structure appears to be, in all essentials, similar to that of the Nuer; the typical segmentary lineage structure, associated

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 1949, No. VII, p. 5.

(2) *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 6.
cf. Nuer leopard-skin chief.

613 parts owned by its branches are fairly distinct. Intermarriage is the main
 614 cause of intersettlement and marriage within this clan is not permitted.

There are a number of stranger lineages in Karacuonyo (Wagwe, Kamwala, Kakmuno, Jokadero, etc.) but they are small lineages and so much intermarried with the dominant KaRacuonyo clan that they have no territorial and political distinctness. Some attention must now be given to the status of stranger lineages to the dominant lineage within a tribe.

We have noted that in Karacuonyo there are few stranger lineages and that they are weak ones. By far the greater majority of the tribe are members of the dominant clan. Other tribal territories display greater clan admixture and the presence of powerful stranger lineages whose numerical importance is reflected in the tribal myths. A European may not quickly become aware of these stranger elements unless land disputes force his attention to them, for the dominant clan is generally identified linguistically with the tribe. JoAlego means both the tribesman of Alego tribal territory and the patrilineal descendants of Alego and KaRacuonyo means both the tribesmen of Karacuonyo tribal territory and the patrilineal descendants of Racuonyo. Therefore if a man of the JoMur stranger lineage in Alego were asked outside Alego to what people he belongs he would reply that he belonged to the Alego folk, but if he were asked within the tribal territory he would say that he was a JoMur, for the JoMur are a distinct agnatic group living in their own portion of country within Alego.

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 613 Now, from the point of view of the dominant clan in a tribal area the
 614 members of this clan alone are the *jopiny* or *jogweng*, the people of the
 609 land and the owners of it, and the rest are *jodak*, the separated people, the strangers: though if they lived among them a long time they speak of them as *jodedo*, for *jodak* is a harsh word.

613 These stranger lineages are grafted into the lineage structure of the
 609 dominant clan so that through recognition of female links the whole tribe
 614 may be regarded as a system of cognatic lineages. Luo speak of the affiliated lineages as *kaorce*, lineages of in-laws, or as *kaner*, lineages of maternal uncles, since it is from them that they take their wives and the mothers of their children. As the affiliated lineages have taken wives from the dominant clan they also come into the category of *okewa*, sister's son, to its members. In this way every lineage in a tribe, whether of the dominant clan or of stranger stock, has a structural position in the system of lineages of which a tribe is composed and of which the lineages of the dominant clan are the framework.

578 The lineages of the clan which owns the tribal territory and those
 613 affiliated to it seem in the past to have been on a general social equality
 614 and to have acted corporately in matters of common tribal interest, particularly in war against other tribes. They were differentiated only in matters of ritual, marriage regulations, and, as explained earlier, in settlement of homicide. In recent years, however, acute differences have arisen about land in those parts of the country where the density of population is greatest, especially in the most northern tribes of Central

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RHODES-LIVINGSTONE INSTITUTE

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Kavirondo, between the different lineages, sometimes between a lineage of the dominant clan and sometimes between two stranger lineages.

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In the past there seems to have been no serious difficulty about land; there was plenty of it and more could be acquired by war and migration. People were glad, I was told, to welcome strangers who added to the fighting strength of their community and who provided them with wives for their sons. The strangers settled as *orče*, in-laws, and become maternal uncles and sisters' sons. Personal relations between the members of the lineage of the dominant clan and the strangers who settled among them and intermarried with them were all of a kinship order. But these relationships of a kinship kind are structural points at which affiliated lineages are grafted on to the tree of descent of the dominant clan. Personal relations give place to structural relations. People do not readily quarrel with their own parents-in-law or maternal uncles or sisters' sons about land, but when the pressure of population becomes acute they may dispute with those who count as lineage in-laws, lineage maternal uncles, or lineage sisters' sons, that is to say when the relationship has become a structural one and ceased to be one of an intimate kinship kind, for intermarriage and thereby the formation of new kinship links between a lineage and another living on its land must for reasons of exogamy become less and less. There is a bit difference between a member of the JoSeje lineage of Alego and a man of a stranger lineage whom he calls sister's son in a personal sense and a man whom he calls sister's son in a structural sense.

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Hence we find to-day in the overcrowded tribal areas considerable inter-lineage enmity about land. If it is not a new feature of Luo life it has certainly been accentuated by European rule and restrictions. Tribal cohesion has suffered from peace and land hunger has increased disharmony.

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The *jopiny* claim the land in virtue of their ownership of the tribal territory and point to their *gundini*, their ancient homestead sites, which are remembered for many generations, and to the graves of their ancestors in the disputed area. But stranger lineages which have grown numerous and powerful may also claim to be *jopiny* in the same area in that they have resided there for many generations and also can point there to their ancestral homestead sites and the graves of their forebears. Sometimes a second stranger lineage have grown strong at the expense of a first and pushed them off their lands, so that three lineages can lay claim to the district. Problems of this kind were arousing much feeling in Alego during my visit, for there land is becoming scarce. They may be further complicated by the fact that the present dominant clan has in the past ousted a clan once dominant in the territory and who also have in the land their homestead sites and graves, for it is held by all Luo that title deeds to lands are ancient homestead sites and ancestral graves and that a man has a right to ask for land to cultivate in the district where his ancestors lived and are buried. This does not mean that a man can come back from the tribal area in which his family have lived for several generations to that in which his earlier forebears lived and claim the land

on which a *gunda*, homestead site, of one of them is situated; but it means that he has a right to cultivate somewhere in that district. There is in this way an overlapping of rights in a territory.

Among the Luo ownership of agricultural land is vested in the lineage and every member of a lineage which owns an area has the right to cultivate in it. The individual has only rights of use, which are hereditary so long as the land is maintained in use; but a man cannot sell the land, for his whole lineage and maybe other lineages as well have rights in it; nor can he reclaim it if he has left it for some years and it is being cultivated by another man. Grazing land (*pap*) is always common. An individual can share his agricultural land with kinsmen, such as a daughter's husband or sister's son, and stranger lineages take root in the soil in the first instance through a personal tie of this kind. Sometimes a lineage of strangers flourish at the expense of the lineage whose forebears first gave permission to their ancestors to cultivate the soil and they begin to get a grip on the land and to count their graves and homestead sites in it. Or the lineage which owns the land increases and wants more land for its own members but finds that the land it wants is under cultivation by the descendants of strangers who now regard it as theirs by right and they begin to contest their occupation of it. They cannot directly challenge their use of the land nor just oust them from possession while they are using it, but they encroach on their cultivations and by constant pressure try to squeeze them out. The strangers have redress before European constituted courts but if they are weak they do not care to resort to them because they know that even if they win the case they must continue to live among their more powerful neighbours against whom they have proceeded. For such situations one cannot find rulings in past custom and when disputes of this kind occur to-day settlement depends on a variety of factors, the strength of the stranger lineages, their wealth, their influence with the chiefs and their ability to bribe them, and so forth.

This paper is sketchy and the survey on which it is based was superficial. Those investigating the Luo at the present time will doubtless give a fuller, more accurate, and more balanced, account of their social organization. Nevertheless, the enquiry has served its limited purpose in that it has shown that Luo political structure with its lineage framework is in essential characteristics like that I have recorded for the Nuer. There are some differences, which I hope to discuss soon in a comparative study of Nilotic lineages as a contribution towards that study of lineage system on a broader African and world-wide basis which research is slowly making possible. However, it may not prove easy to determine whether the differences are significant till an intensive study of the Luo has been made. All this paper claims to do is to show that the Luo have the same type of structure as the Nuer. Recent research has demonstrated that both Anuak and Shilluk have a lineage structure though it is

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MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE LUO OF KENYA

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Por

These notes refer to the ordinary form of Luo marriage. There is another and rare form called *por* which is marriage by elopement, and is regarded with shame and ridicule. A man brings a girl to the *simba* where he penetrates her. She remains in his home and cooks in his mother's hut, a sure sign that a woman regards herself as a wife. Or a man and his sweetheart run away to a distant tribe and cohabit there. The girl's family may try to make her return to them, but if she refuses to do so they regularize the union by accepting some cattle from her lover, though he does not pay as many cattle as he would have done had the marriage been negotiated in the usual manner. A girl married to-day by Christian rites is sometimes referred to disparagingly as a *dhako ma por* because she cooks in her husband's home immediately after her wedding.

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Moko

Moko is the correct form of marriage, and the word is also used for the first phase of it, the abduction of the bride and her defloration before witnesses. A youth, having obtained his father's consent, looks for a suitable wife. He may already have his eye on a local girl, but frequently he goes with a friend to look for a bride from the home of a distant kinsman in whose neighbourhood there are plenty of unrelated girls. When he hears of a nice girl he visits her home and sits in its *simba* till she and the other girls of her home come to chat with him. If he likes the girl he later returns to her home accompanied by two friends, one of them, called *jagam* or *jatelo*, being a friend of both families whose business it is to negotiate between them. The young man asks the girl to marry him. If she is unwilling the marriage is unlikely to take place, even though her parents are agreeable to it. If she favours him she tells him to discuss the matter with her parents. When they consult the parents the suitor sits between his two friends so that the people of the home can tell at a glance, if they look into the *simba*, which of the visitors it is who is asking for the hand of their daughter. The suitor leaves the *jagam* to do the talking. As he is a friend of the girl's family her father knows that he would not have undertaken to act as go-between unless the suitor had enough cattle. There is no mention of cattle at this stage.

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The next phase is the abduction of the bride. The young men of the bridegroom's home come to the girl's home in the early morning and wait outside the entrance to the kraal. The *jagam* enters the homestead and goes to the *suwindhi*, the girls' dormitory in charge of an old woman called the *pim*, and he shouts to this old woman that he wants their bride. After being promised a present the old woman opens the door. The girl at once begins to make trouble. She holds on to the old woman and screams and struggles as the *jagam* drags her away. The young men of the village come to her assistance and a mimic fight takes place between them and the youths from the bridegroom's home. It is seldom that a bride is averse to going to her husband, who may have long been her lover, but she must resist with as much noise as she can to show that this is not an elopement but a proper marriage. Once she is out of earshot of her home she goes quietly with the young men. When they arrive at the bridegroom's home she goes straight to the *simba*, where his brothers and sisters entertain her, the sisters chaffing her and telling her that their home is a much better place than the one

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Ramba.

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619 Live on south side of Ugowe Bay, opposite Uyoma country Nilotic people. Head chief: Gori Kogalo.

Subdivisions:—

Kadweti Chief: Awino.
Kabonyo—Osewi, Magolo.
Kajuang—Yariwo, Arani.
Kanyamwa or Kanyambo—Kogalo and Ogalo.
Yahunda—Chikungi, Uyamu.
Saki—Usodo, Uyumbi, Monguwiri.
Kachola or Kologi—Othina.
Kumungu—Mwai.
Kuchieng—Owino, Tigo.
Kasudu—Ukoli.

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The Saki people live near Usau hill, and there is a feud between them and the Kanyamwa owing to the latter having been driven from the lake shore, and thus losing their fishing rights. The Saki are very friendly with the Uyoma tribe and the Kanyamwa with the Sawakwa.

Nyakatch.

Live at south-east corner of Ugowe Bay. Nilotic origin. Very friendly people, live in great dread of the Lumbwa. Head chief: Uhuri.

Subdivisions:—

Kadianga Chief: Uhuri.	Kajembo—Atek.
Kabodo—Magero.	Kandaria—Omono.
Jimo—Mwana.	Knguta—Sewe.

Kalachonyo.

A large tribe of Nilotic origin on the south side of Ugowe Bay. They stretch from the west of the Nyakach people to the west side of Una or Oma Mountain. The head chief is Nyakiti.

Subdivisions:—

Kanyajok Chief—Nyakiti.
Uma—Ugwan.
Nyalo—Ngar.
Kanyiperi—Umolu.
Adneti—Nyangu, Odondi.
Yakandaiya—Ugalu, Oyugi.
Utien—Ngare.
Kodera—Opiawili.
Unyango—Ugalu.
Akela—Achieng.
Ojuach—Ogalo.
Ukwainu—Kimuto.
Kabondo—Laila.

[pp. 57-60 not processed]

241 life of the countryside. Ofttimes the boys are armed with slings from
 136 which stones are projected at random into the midst of the crop, or
 857 into the midst of a flock of birds as they rise. One of the reasons why
 the Luo denude the land of trees is because they give harbourage to
 their bird enemies.

241 They are wise to insect pests also, and have a greater belief in
 136 their remedies than many a farmer has in the aids supplied by our
 789 civilization. The medicine is called by two names, "yadh miri" or
 "yadh liase." It is employed against a small red and black beetle,
 called by the Luo "Nyanginja" which eats the flower of the millet,
 thus preventing a crop. The medicine man who prepares it must be
 a man of peaceable disposition and character, not a quarreller or
 disputer with his neighbours. The whole success of the medicine
 depends on the absence of disputation and quarrelling, and of the
 grosser forms of vice, like adultery. No adulterer may be supplied
 [837] with the medicine, for his very handling of it would nullify its useful-
 ness, not only for himself, but also for his neighbours. All must be
 peace in the community until the harvest is reaped. Unlike other
 medicines, which are tied to a pole and left to work their influence,
 "yadh miri" is made into a decoction, which is sprinkled over the
 growing crop at eventide. I have seen the operation at a place called
 Maranda in Sakwa, Central Kavirondo. It was then being used against
 maize borer. At a time when this pest was giving a good deal of
 trouble to European farmers, I heard a man who was back in the
 Reserve on leave from a farm in the Kitale district, pour scorn on the
 methods used by Europeans with various sprays. He was by way
 of being one of the more progressive men, but he had nothing but
 absolute faith in the efficacy of "yadh miri."

● 578 Crops damaged by domestic stock gave rise to many an angry
 685 passion. The owner of the crop had liberty to chastise personally the
 herdboy (or man) through whose carelessness the stock were left
 untended. If the herd were a lad he could be cuffed and thumped
 without being able to proceed against the assailant. Nor did the father
 protest, provided the chastisement were in reason, for he knew that
 his son had rendered him liable to a claim for compensation. As
 likely as not he would add his own quota to the punishment already
 meted out. If the owner feared that he would get the worst of it in
 a personal encounter with a herdsman, then he had his remedy at law.

241 When the crop is ready for harvesting it is the duty of the men
 to do the reaping. In the case of millet, this is a laborious business,
 calling for judgment, for not all the heads would be ripe, and some
 must be left to ripen after the bulk has been reaped. It is the task
 [462] of the women and children to pack the crop into the grain baskets
 857 and carry it to the grain stores. In the case of millet it is quite

241 common to allow some of the sturdier roots to spring up again and give a second crop. I have seen some very fine heads of grain as a result of this method.

251 The crop is stored, unthreshed if millet or maize, in large basket-like receptacles, covered with thatch and standing on stones or
 ● 578 supported on forked sticks across which a rough platform is made. It is the work of the man to prepare the grain stores, and I suppose that there is no more prolific source of domestic bickering than these supply. Some men are shiftless, and leave off the preparation of the stores until near to harvest, sometimes exhausting in so doing the patience of the wife. Or he may be neglectful, and leave the thatch unrepaired, rendering the grain liable to suffer from the weather. Many women would far rather see the living hut left in disrepair than that the grain should be imperilled.

251 The store varies in size according to the grain for which it is intended. The large size is for millet and maize, the small for the
 285 small millet and simsim. The Luo name for them is "dero." The large sizes run up to six feet high by about six feet in diameter. The small about four feet by three. They are made from swamp reeds built in a very coarse basket work fashion, and are finished off with a coating of cow dung inside. The better made stores have provision for access to the grain, by the simple device of cutting away a section from the top of the side, just under the thatch. It used to be the
 [43] custom for a present of a small basket of grain to be given to the
 797 Jabilo or medicine man, after harvest. This custom has already died out in many places.

241 It was the woman's first care to secure seed for the next year.
 462 Millet and maize was hung in the head, sometimes outside from the branch of a tree, more frequently from the roof of the hut. Smaller grain, and beans were stored in pots in the living hut, and to ensure their being kept in good condition, it was the woman's duty to empty the contents of the pots periodically onto a "thigo" or large circular flat basket work tray, or some part of the courtyard swept clean, that the sun might keep them dry. Lack of seed, owing to a planting dying off from lack of rain was a serious matter. Seed was then begged from neighbours more fortunate.

422 Not all the grain went into the common store, for all the cultivation was by no means the common united effort of all the members
 583 of the family. The main effort of the members was put into the fields from which all were to draw their food supply, but in addition individual members had their own plots which are called "mondo." The head of the family would have his own "mondo," and the grain from this went into a separate store. This grain formed a reserve in

242 land, "Mbora." A piece of land weed infested in the middle of cultivation is called "sino," and the Luo are alive to the menace
 [578] this neglected patch is to the crops surrounding it. A man who allows "sino" to endanger his neighbours' crops is very unpopular.

STATUS OF WOMEN:

562 The position of women amongst the Luo is one of great influence,
 773 in spite of many things which show that they are not regarded as the equal of the men. While they have nothing in their creation stories which gives the male such pre-eminence as is given in the Hebrew account of creation in the second chapter of Genesis, yet even in their stories it is the male which is created first. The origin of the female is surrounded with mystery, none have any clear account of her origin. But it is significant that the name by which the first woman is known to many of the Luo is ALOO. LOO or LOWO is the stem meaning earth or soil, and there is undoubtedly some connection in their minds between the fruitful soil and woman. But though her origin is surrounded in mystery, she soon is made to carry the responsibility for the fact that the sons of men have got to work. Lest the story should be unknown to some it is worth while repeating it here. According to the creation story, the first man to be created was one called Podho. To him the Creator (called Nyasaye) gave a magic hoe, which worked by itself, requiring no arm to wield it. With the hoe Nyasaye gave Podho a command that he was never to attempt to do any work with it himself. If he should disobey this command then the hoe would lose its virtue and cease to work unaided. This happened before the advent of ALOO (sometimes called also MIHAHA). When eventually Podho was given ALOO, he gave the hoe over to her care, telling her at the same time of the command which Nyasaye had laid down. For a time all went well. When they wanted any digging to be done all they had to do was to take the hoe out to the site, show it what they wanted it to dig and leave it to do the work. In the evening it was brought in again. But one day curiosity was too much for ALOO. She felt that she must feel what it was like to turn up a few sods. So she picked up the hoe and with it turned up a little soil. Then becoming suddenly afraid she dropped the hoe and went home, but did not tell her husband, Podho. However she was unable to hide what she had done, for in the evening when they went to bring in the hoe, it lay where she had dropped it, and had done no work. Then the voice of Nyasaye said that as they were now so clever that they knew how to dig, never more would the hoe dig for them. So to this day woman is blamed as the one through whose wrongdoing the curse of work came to men.

562 However the tradition came into existence it reflects the common tendency of many creation stories to put the blame on the woman,

642 have absolute power, but in reality their influence is not great. Each chief
 643 subdivides his territory, placing each portion under a sub-chief. These sub-chiefs
 or headmen are supposed to attend frequently at the chief's village in order to hear
 and carry out his orders. If a crisis arises, an informal council of the heads of the
 village is called and the *patres familiarum* can express their views, though the
 decision rests with the chief. There is no kind of voting. This council will also
 assemble if the rule of the chief becomes intolerable. They may threaten to
 secede, but their resistance is always passive; the usual result, however, is that
 one or more of the headmen set up as chiefs on their own account, and quietly
 [423] disregard the orders of their *quondam* superior. Land is held in common by the
 members of each clan, but jealously guarded from subjects of all other chiefs. A
 [164] man may, and frequently does, move from one clan to another, but in that case he
 has to obey the orders of the chief to whose clan he has attached himself. There
 are no formalities attendant on such a change.

578 Trespass by the members of one chieftaincy upon the land of another is
 indeed the usual cause of the frequent small quarrels which arise and very often
 lead to bloodshed.

Internally, however, private ownership of land has to some extent made its
 423 appearance. The Jaluo village represents a family, the headman being the father
 621 or (if he be dead) the eldest brother. Besides his family he will, if he is a chief, or
 [177] sub-chief, generally shelter one or two retainers whom he calls his *askari*,¹ police.
 When the time comes for laying out the *Shamba*¹ or agricultural land, each adult
 male and female marks out and tills his own piece, the married women being
 helped by their daughters and younger sons; although the family in practice share
 the produce, theoretically the crop from each plot belongs to the member who
 tilled it; thus, if one of the sons wishes to sell some grain he can only sell what he
 has grown himself, and, similarly, one *askari* reaping what another has sown would
 be considered a thief.

685 Cases occasionally arise which illustrate this: if A's cattle or goats wander
 423 into B's *shamba*, though A and B live in one village, B claims compensation.
 Private tenure is, however, only temporary. If a village uses a certain piece of
 land for a year and then leaves it, another village may cultivate there; but as
 the *shambas* are usually close to the villages, and villages are separated by some
 little distance, such cases of appropriation are practically unknown. The rights,
 however, to a certain piece of land are only squatter's rights and confer no claim
 in *perpetuo*.

361 In shape the Jaluo village is circular and is fenced round with euphorbia
 [423] bush, stone or mud walls, or wattle, as may be most convenient. In the centre
 is the cattle pen; around this are the store houses of basket or wicker work;
 they are raised some two feet from the ground and are about five feet high
 and three feet in diameter; there is a small opening near the top sufficient to

¹ Swahili word adopted.

LINEAGE FORMATION AMONG THE LUO

601 may be of Bantu origin. The facility with which the Luo incorporate linguistic
 613 borrowings even in the case of fundamental concepts (e.g. *Nyasaye*, God; *wasign*,
 enemies, &c.) is in marked contrast to the persistence with which they have retained
 the other elements of their culture and imposed them on the non-Luo groups assimilated by them. The Luo sum up in the term *libamba* all those forces of friction and competition which weaken the solidarity of a lineage segment and lead to its further subdivision. The quarrels of uterine brothers and the jealousies of co-wives are regarded as typical of these. A *libamba* is, then, a rival lineage segment co-ordinate to one's own. When a man speaks of his *libamba* he always means a segment other than his own, but included in the same superordinate segment as is the one he has in mind as claiming his loyalty at that particular moment. It is those groups of *dhoudi* which stand in the *libamba* relationship to one another which play together at *adhula*, wrestle together, and fight together with clubs.¹

613 The lineages of class B remain passive except when called into action in connexion with certain ritual situations, and the chance of this occurring depends mainly on their genealogical position. Those which are below the level of the minimal *dhoot* and *gweng*, down to and including the members of compound and elementary families, are constantly being involved as groups in the many rituals which accompany marriages and funerals, the founding of new homesteads, the starting of cultivation, sowing and reaping, and the organization of other periodic affairs within the minimal *gweng*. The class B segments above this level only come into action haphazardly according to the incidence of ancestral sacrifices. When any social group is faced with a misfortune for which no specific remedy is recognized, a diviner (*ajwoga*) is consulted, and sacrifice made to the patrilineal ancestor indicated as responsible for the trouble. 613 Which one is selected depends on the gravity of the misfortune and the level of 769 lineage grouping affected by it. The diviner is most likely to indicate one of the 782 eponymous ancestors of *dhoudi* as they are most prominent in the minds of all. If, however, the eponymous ancestor of any other segment is indicated, it would emerge from its passivity into action. Even when it is the eponymous ancestor of a *dhoot* who receives sacrifice, some or all of its genealogical co-ordinates and subordinates may only be class B segments, and these would be called into action on such occasions since the sacrificing segment usually calls its co-ordinates to participate and is itself represented by its major segments.² All class B segments acting in this way, whether below or above the level of the minimal *dhoot*, are called *anywola*. Even a segment which is itself a *dhoot* and *gweng* may be called *anywola* in this context. The etymology of this word³ might well suggest a uterine principle of grouping. However, as with *dhoot*, every *anywola* is a patrilineal descent group, and whether it takes 613 its name from a man or a woman depends on the genealogical incidence of co-wives and uterine brothers and the circumstances which call into action the agnatic groups

¹ Cf. the Tallensi concept of *swast* (Fortes, *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 32, 37, 201). Here, too, there is the idea of a reciprocal relationship between co-ordinates, but to the Tallensi the chief emphasis is on the bond of unity resulting from ancestral brotherhood, whereas for the Luo it is on competitive subordination within a common superordinate. Co-ordinate segments are equally *libamba* to one

another whether their eponyms were co-wives or uterine brothers.

² See below, p. 35. Cf. Fortes's analysis of the same principle among the Tallensi (*The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi*, p. 31).

³ *nyul* n., birth; *nywola* v., to give birth. But it is possible to apply this root to procreation by men.

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553 was given his name reveals their attempt to avoid the consequences of his act.

762 The second case arises from a breach of customary law which
159 in the old days would have meant banishment but which today
684 brings social ostracism.

[78] Suicide Case No. 2.

The suicide was caught in the act of intercourse with his full brother's wife. The Luo believe that such an act involving members of the same *Jokamio* (that is, those descended from the same mother or grandmother) brings *chira* to the whole clan. The security and solidarity of family relationships are threatened by the act because it involves quarrels which may lead to violence within the primary segment of the clan. In this case the brother did not tell the elders of the clan but merely threatened to do so. The guilty man returned to his own homestead and hanged himself in his hut. The house was destroyed and members of the extended family were cleansed by the *jabilo*. The cleansing ceremony took the same form as in the first case, with the addition that the village was sprinkled with medicine in order that it might continue to be used by the dead man's family.

In the next case there are two clear motives which led to the suicide. The first, perhaps the most important, lies in indigenous beliefs and attitudes, while the second lies in more modern attitudes.

Suicide Case No. 3.

159 This Luo was about 30 years old and had been employed as
762 a driver for the Government for many years. Drivers in Kenya
556 receive a relatively high salary, and in addition some take advantage of their position and make extra money by illegally
[61] charging people for transportation. Through these activities, he became a relatively rich man and was able to marry a total of five wives at his comparatively young age. He was also wealthy

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in cattle, and had a permanent modern house at his homestead where four of his wives cultivated large gardens. His fifth wife lived with him at his place of employment. At the time of his suicide he was in the process of marrying a sixth wife when, during one of the marriage ceremonies at her village, a brother of the bride objected to her becoming his wife. He charged that the man had already too many wives and could not look after them. As proof, he offered the evidence that his most recent wife, the fifth one, was no more than a prostitute and that he, himself, had used her on several occasions. This caused a fight in the village and quarrels which led to the exchange of many curses between the two groups, and therefore the wedding could never take place. The driver returned to his homestead to confront the wife named in the incident with the accusation and, in typical Luo fashion, she calmly admitted her guilt, chiding him to do something about it. He beat her severely and she ran from her house and spent the night in the bush. He brooded all night on what had happened and on the shame his wife had brought him. Moreover, he knew that he was shortly to be accused of fraudulent conversion of funds by the Government and would lose his job, if he did not end up in prison: neither of which were considered really serious. However, in his emotional state, these must be considered as contributory causes. He could see his whole world collapsing around him. 159
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The next morning he sent his servant, a young lad, to the butcher's shop for meat in order to get him out of the way. He then hanged himself from the ceiling of his hut. [578]

My Luo informants state with confidence that the prime cause of this suicide was the behavior of his wife, which had brought shame to a proud and successful man, so that he could no longer face his friends. The fact that the Government was interested in recovering a large sum of money which he was alleged to have used for his own purposes is, in my opinion however, a contributory factor. [558]

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from the fear of consequences arising from the behavior of her son and, in two cases, there was a suspicion that the women did not in fact commit suicide, but were murdered by their husbands in such a way that it looked as if they had committed suicide.

Suicide Case No. 11.

A young woman was accused by her husband at a beer party of having slipped quietly out for intercourse with a man from the village. To prove that she was innocent, she hanged herself on a tree which was near the homestead. If she had been guilty, the Joluo argue, "she could have been cleansed, but she could not be cleansed for having done nothing."

Suicide Case No. 12.

A young wife, newly married, had offended her husband in some way and he refused to eat her food. (This is a customary curse and is a very severe punishment to a wife.) She threatened to kill herself if he did not eat it. He then took the food to the senior wife, who ate it, adding insult to the injury already done. The young wife went to her hut where she stood on her grinding stone and hanged herself from the roof.

The elders were quick to point out in this instance that since her death the village had been abandoned and many children of the lineage had died. All this, they believe, was caused by the ghost of the abused wife.

The third case involved a young girl who committed suicide because she did not wish to marry the person chosen for her by her parents.

Suicide Case No. 13.

A very young girl, little more than a child, objected in the traditional way to the union which her parents had arranged.

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- 762 The parents insisted that she be sent or "dragged" to her husband. On the night of the ceremonial defloration she committed suicide by hanging. This act is said to have brought a curse, not only to the prospective groom's homestead, but also on her own minimal lineage. Her mother was so struck by grief that she committed suicide later. The mother's case will be discussed below as case number 21.

The next two cases are those where foul play was suspected.

Suicide Case No. 14.

- 762 A woman was found hanging by a rope at night by her husband. He dug her grave and had buried her in the morning. In evidence given at the preliminary inquiry witnesses testified to the fact that she and her husband quarrelled some hours before her death, as the result of a beer party, and that she had left early for her own village. The body showed signs of having been beaten, but her husband argued that he had beaten her after she had hanged herself, as is the custom of the Joluo.
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- 578 The case was not tried for lack of evidence, and the husband's family believed that she did in fact commit suicide, whereas her family believed that she was murdered.

[583] It is significant to note that the husband did not claim the return of bride-wealth, as he would likely have done had it been a clear case of suicide. Neither did her family offer to repay the bride-wealth, or to give another girl in lieu of bride-wealth, as they might have done had the husband been clear of blame.

Suicide Case No. 15.

- 762 A woman had quarrelled with her husband because she alleged that he would not give her her proper share of sexual pleasure. The argument involved other wives and they told this woman that her husband hated her and that she would be better dead. The next morning she was found on her bed, having been killed by a knife or having inflicted a fatal wound on herself with a knife.
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762 his mother and took the *sim-sim* by stealth. When the hus-
 159 band came to collect it for the Chief, he found that a large por-
 [595] tion of it had disappeared. This caused a bitter quarrel be-
 tween him and the boy's mother.

In fear of the consequences of what her son had done, the woman placed a rope, which was used for tying up one of her cows for milking, in a small basket and went out of the village as if to collect vegetables. She went to one of the largest trees in a nearby valley which was hidden from sight by thick bush and there hanged herself. My informant then described the scene as follows: "The first person who found the body caned it very hard and, after having cut the rope, started mourning. The place was soon filled with people and some were asked [783] to bring hoes, axes, and *pangas* to destroy the tree. There and then people of the village and her lineage started their work and within a day the tree was completely destroyed and all the roots dug up from the ground and burned."

"When I asked why the tree was being destroyed," the informant went on, "the elders told me that it was being done to stop more people from hanging from it, for we Luo believe that hanging is inherited by different people in different clans. If a clan had not had a person hang himself before, it is difficult [824] for one in that clan to hang himself or herself. If a tree on which someone had hanged himself was allowed to remain, it would drag other people to it for the same purpose."

The next case involves a curse as well as domestic trouble.

Suicide Case No. 17.

159 The husband of this suicide had been having considerable
 762 trouble with his cattle and many were dying from disease. The
 ● 578 beginning of the illness coincided with the elopement of her daughter with a young man who had neither paid bride-wealth nor seemed likely to pay it. Her husband blamed his misfortunes on this incident and his suspicions were confirmed by

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the local prophet (*jabilo*). When he returned to the village from his visit to the *jabilo*, he cursed his wife as follows: "I wish the disease which killed my heifers would kill you, my wife, for your daughter is a whore who has brought the disease of her womb to my cattle." From the evidence, the woman seemed to have planned her death carefully. She made her daughters swear that they would not be married to anyone who would ever give her husband cattle. She distributed all of her belongings to them and placed a curse on the village to the effect that her husband should never be able to marry another wife. She then entered her house and hanged herself.

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Since that time, the Luo pointed out, his daughters have all eloped with persons who have not paid bride-wealth and no other woman has ever consented to marry him or to live with him.

The next case is typical of many which involve jealousy at the taking of a second wife, especially without the first wife's permission, or as in this case, expressly against her wishes. My informant was living near the village when the suicide took place and his mother became involved in it. The story was told to me in his mother's presence and she helped with the details.

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545**Suicide Case No. 18.**

A man, Okech, who was happily married, invited his wife's sister, Apolo, to come to live at his homestead to act as a nurse-maid for their first child.⁴

⁴ This is common practice among the Joluo and often the "nurse" (*japidi*) is later married by her brother-in-law, especially if the sisters cooperate and agree to be happy together. Frequently the *japidi* will form a strong attachment to her brother-in-law, and marriage becomes desirable or even necessary. If a man marries a *japidi*, she becomes known as *nyar siwoho*, the wife of the same blood, and the children of both wives share the same hut and trace descent through the elder sister. The term *siwoho* is also used to describe a girl given to replace a sister who was unable to bear her husband a son; it therefore does have a slight connotation of stigma.

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THE SCHOOL AGE

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be found playing alone. Weaving becomes more popular 857
between these ages, and before the advent of thread this 285
was done by means of grass stalks which were woven
into several patterns.

These patterns are still woven sometimes at home and
sometimes at play, but although they have not totally
disappeared they are no longer much in evidence. Male
children are sometimes taught to weave patterns by the
girls. At present odd threads gathered from old socks or
rags are used while stalks of grass serve as needles.

Age-group friendship. The age-group friendship which 857
characterizes so much of a girl's pre-marital life first 572
makes its appearance during the school-going age. But
at this time it is friendship in the simplest sense and is
more like a coming-together brought about by common
interests. The main feature of the relationship is visiting,
combined with moderate entertainment. After taking
food the young guests join in the play activities of the
friends they visit. The parents also take an interest and
put up with the financial burden involved. But the [613]
friendship established is essentially external in that it is
established between neighbouring girls of two lineages.*
Girls visit their friends in groups, and the relationship
grows weaker as the girls grow up. It appeared to me
that this friendship is strongest just before the advent of
their association with males on a sex basis.

As their interest in boys increases, the young girls'
natural desire for friendship is fulfilled. Friendships with
other girls are very much weakened by marriage and

**Lineages.* The term lineages refers to enlarged families with one
common ancestor or founder. These may live side by side with the
other related lineages. With the common ancestor and the branching
family groups, the lineage structure appears as a 'Root System'.

As a result of fights between the various lineages in the past, [578]
some have been widely dispersed and may be found living among [166]
other groups not related to them. Frequent migrations have also
tended to complicate the structure.

A NEW EARTH

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telling the rice-growers they must make and maintain their own bunds. Last season the output jumped to 50,000 bags.

III

133 We drove to Nyabondo across the Kano plains. No one loves these plains. They are not only flat; they are absolutely treeless, dry, cracked, windswept, overcrowded, dusty and mean. The soil is 'black cotton', an especially viscous clay in which any vehicle bogs down irrevocably in wet weather—very fertile potentially, but soul-destroying to work. 'The people are like their soil,' I was told. 'They break your heart and yet you go on trying, something's there.'

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[134] Everywhere are circles of a particular euphorbia, a dark-green, harsh, ugly plant that grows about eight feet tall and surrounds every group of huts. When a family head dies, his homestead is evacuated, his huts are left to rot away and only the euphorbia hedge remains, so the plains are covered with old circles as well as those in use. People have tried planting eucalyptus trees, but white ants eat them before they are man-high.

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No individual cultivates his land in one piece. He digs or ploughs a patch here, a patch there, another bit over there, two more bits down the hill and a piece two miles off across the valley that belonged to his mother's uncle. This is known as fragmentation; it is almost universal among Bantu people, exists also among others such as the Luo, and is like a net spread for the feet of Progress in which he becomes enmeshed and stultified.

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The first stage of land enclosure must be for every cultivator to exchange fragments with his neighbours, so that all his land is gathered together in one piece. It is the first stage and also the hardest; land is life's blood to the people; it is like exhorting men to exchange their blood, or their children. Suspicions dart out of their holes like bee-eaters. Won't so-and-so, my neighbour, get an unfair share? The bit he wants to swap for my piece is smaller. Give up my fertile patch by the river where bananas flourish for that barren stretch of hillside? Never! Somewhere there is a trick in all this. . . .

THE RELUCTANT LUO

IV

After Mr. Onyango had spoken, others said their piece, and I asked the opinions of some of the women, who will never speak unless they are directly asked. One replied, through an interpreter, in these words:

'I was against consolidation. My own land was fertile and I did not want to lose it and have other land not as good as mine. I tried to persuade my husband. We had many arguments, and the peace of our house was destroyed. At last I saw that I must give in if our home was to become peaceful again. We exchanged gardens, and then I saw that the new gardens were as fertile as my own. Now the men are helping women on the land and this is something that has never happened before. Men and women are working together. This is because the men see that there is money in growing crops and that bigger crops will make them rich.'

A second woman—both were middle-aged—spoke after her.

'I was not of that opinion. I wanted consolidation before it came here. If you have land near your home, you can work to improve it. If it is a long way off, you cannot put on manure. I understood the value of manure by seeing crops grown by the Better Farmers. Before, I had four *shambas* and one was over a mile away. Now they are all together and near my home. There is only one difficulty. Our custom is, when a son gets married, he leaves his father's *shamba* to start one of his own. I do not want to break this custom, but now I have a married son and there is nowhere for him to go.'

And a third woman, rather older, added her piece.

'I was in favour of consolidation too. The boundaries of land have caused many disputes and quarrels amongst us. When there are fixed boundaries, these quarrels fade away. So I wanted consolidation before it came, and my husband agreed. Now I can farm properly and put manure on the *shamba*; we have a shed for the cattle to stay in at night. Besides that, my husband employs two men. When he goes away I supervise them and the work is not so hard. Men and women never worked together before. Now they do, and this is a big thing.'